

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 6, 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24 and 27 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system comprising:

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on respective displays of the terminal devices together with message sender identifying information of persons who sent the messages; ~~and~~

a table storing therein, in association with each other, identifiers of persons using said virtual communication spaces, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons, said character trains being used as said message sender identifying information; and

means for determining a character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for a designated one of said identifiers of the person, in accordance with an association of said designated identifier of the person and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with the ~~part of said corresponding~~ character-train information in said table ~~means~~.

2. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 1 wherein said table stores different character-train information for the identifier of a given person for use in respective, different ones of said virtual communications spaces.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein said table stores different character-train information for the identifier of a given person for use in communications with respective, different persons.

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein

said plurality of terminal devices use said table in common.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein the character-train information stored in said table is accessible from said respective terminal devices.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein character-train information to be stored in said table ~~means~~ is sent through terminal devices from which said messages are transmitted.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 1, wherein said network is formed of said plurality of terminal devices and a server, and character-train information to be stored in said table is set in said server.

8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 1 wherein said message sender identifier is converted into the character-train information at the terminal device which receives the message.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system, comprising:
a server;
a plurality of terminal devices each having a display and forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on the display of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;
a table disposed in said server and storing therein, in association with each other, identifiers of persons using said terminal devices, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons; and
a search device disposed in said server and searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when said server receives said identifier of the message sender and a message from said message sender, for transferring said character-train information together with said message, wherein said search means determines a character train among, said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in

accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said corresponding character-train information in said table.

10. (ORIGINAL) The chat system according to Claim 9 wherein said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces; said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said sender identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and sender identifier.

11. (ORIGINAL) The chat system according to Claim 9 wherein said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated; said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system comprising:
a server;
a plurality of terminal devices having corresponding displays and forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on the display of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;
a table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers of persons using said terminal devices, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons, in association with each other; and
search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device receives said identifier of the message sender and a message from said message sender, so that the character-train information is displayed together with the received message on said display means of said terminal device, wherein said search means determines a character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in

accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said corresponding character-train information in said table.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system comprising:

a server;

a plurality of terminal devices having corresponding displays forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on the display of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers of persons using said terminal devices, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons, in association with each other; and

search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device transmits said identifier so that the character-train information is transmitted together with the message, wherein said search means determines a character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said corresponding character-train information in said table.

14. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 12, wherein:

said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and sender identifier.

15. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 13, wherein:

said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and identifier.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 12, wherein: said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated;

said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 13, wherein: said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated;

said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A record medium for use in and readable by a terminal device of a chat system, wherein a plurality of terminal devices form with a server a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on a display of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages, said record medium comprising:

a table storing therein, in association with each other, identifiers of persons who use the chat system, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information; and

search means for searching said table ~~means~~ for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a person who is going to send a message and outputting the character-train information sought, as said message sender identifying information, for

transmission with said message, wherein said search means determines a character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the person, in accordance with the association of said identifier of the person and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said corresponding character-train information in said table.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to Claim 18, wherein:

said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to Claim 18 wherein:

the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated;

said table has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A record medium for use in and readable by a terminal device of a chat system, wherein a plurality of terminal devices form a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on a display of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages said record medium comprising:

a table for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information, in association with each other; and

search means for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of the message sender received through the virtual communication spaces and outputting the character-train information, as said message sender identifying information, for display on said display, wherein said search means determines a character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in accordance with an association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said corresponding character-train information in said table means.

22. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to Claim 21, wherein:

said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

23. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to Claim 21, wherein:

the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated;

said table has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A record medium for use by and readable in a server of a chat system, wherein said server forms a network with a plurality of terminal devices, said server being adapted to allow said plurality of terminal devices to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the

messages, said record medium comprising:

a table storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information, in association with each other; and

converting means for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of the message sender sent together with a message by any of said terminal devices and outputting the character-train information for sending it together with said message to a given virtual communication space, wherein said converting means determines a character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for said identifier of the message sender, in accordance with the association of a corresponding one of said identifiers of the persons and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with said corresponding character-train information in said table means.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to Claim 24, wherein:

said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to Claim 24, wherein:

the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated;

said table has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and

said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system, comprising:

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual

communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on a display of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a memory having stored therein messages in association with identifiers of persons using said terminal devices;

a table storing therein said identifiers of the persons, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons, in association with each other; and

converting means for converting a designated one of said identifiers of the persons stored in said memory to a predetermined character train and causing said display to display the character train, wherein said converting means determines said predetermined character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for said designated identifier of the person, in accordance with the association of said designated identifier of the person and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with a corresponding part of said corresponding character-train information in said table.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 27, wherein: said network comprises a plurality of terminal devices and one server, and said memory is provided in said server.

29. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 27, wherein: said memory is provided in each of said terminal devices.

30. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to Claim 29, wherein: said converting means is provided in each of said terminal devices.